

## Message Text

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SUBJECT: US CONTRIBUTION TO EXPERTS REPORT ON MIDDLE EAST

REF: CLARK-GARVEY TELCON 2/25/77

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF SUBJECT PAPER:

BEGIN TEXT:

SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE MAGHREB

I. THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

A. THE ISRAELI POSITION

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B. THE PRESENT ISRAELI GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO  
ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT, SYRIA, AND JORDAN,  
WITH THE PURPOSE OF ACHIEVING EITHER A FINAL PEACE  
SETTLEMENT OR OF REACHING AGREEMENTS WITH ANY OF THE  
CONFRONTATION STATES TO TERMINATE THE STATE OF UAR. ISRAEL  
REFUSES, HOWEVER, TO PARTICIPATE IN NEGOTIATIONS TO WHICH

THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION (PLO) IS A PARTY.  
THE ISRAELI PUBLIC IS DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF THE NEGOTIATING  
PROCESS, ALTHOUGH THERE IS RECOGNITION THAT THE PROTECTION

OF ISRAEL'S STANDING WITH THE UNITED STATES MAY REQUIRE  
PARTICIPATION IN NEGOTIATIONS.

2. THE UPCOMING MAY 17 KNESSET ELECTIONS MAY WELL ENTAIL  
SIGNIFICANT LOSSES BY THE HERETOFORE DOMINANT LABOR  
PARTY. TWO NEW POLITICAL PARTIES--ONE LED BY FORMER  
CHIEF OF STAFF YADIN, THE OTHER BY WAR HERO GENERAL  
"ARIK" SHARON--ARE EXPECTED TO MAKE RESPECTABLE SHOWINGS,  
ESPECIALLY YADIN'S PARTY. THE PREDOMINANTLY ARAB COMMU-  
NIST RAKAH IS ALSO LIKELY TO INCREASE ITS KNESSET REPRE-  
SENTATION SIGNIFICANTLY, AT THE EXPENSE OF LABOR AND ITS  
LEFT-WING ALLY, MAPAM.

3. AN ELECTION OUTCOME CONSISTENT WITH THAT PREDICTED  
BY RECENT POLLS WOULD NOT BE LIKELY TO INCREASE THE  
ABILITY OR WILLINGNESS OF ISRAEL TO MAKE MAJOR TERRITORIAL  
CONCESSIONS. INDEED, A DEFINITE POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT  
THE FURTHER LOSS OF STRENGTH BY LABOR COULD LEAD TO  
FRAGMENTATION OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM AND PERHAPS A  
SUCCESSION OF UNSTABLE GOVERNMENTS. SUCH GOVERNMENTS  
WOULD BE SERIOUSLY CONSTRAINED IN THEIR NEGOTIATING  
FLEXIBILITY BY THEIR PARLIAMENTARY DEPENDENCE UPON RIGHT-  
WING ELEMENTS. ALTERNATIVELY, A NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT  
WOULD BE UNABLE TO MAKE MAJOR CONCESSIONS BECAUSE OF  
THE INCLUSION OF THE HARDLINE LIKUD.

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B. POSITIONS OF THE ARAB CONFRONTATION STATES

4. EGYPT. WHILE SADAT APPEARS TO HAVE EMERGED UNCHAL-  
LENGED IN THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS FIELD FROM THE RIOTS THAT  
OCCURRED THROUGHOUT EGYPT, JANUARY 18 - 19, HIS AURA OF  
INVINCIBILITY IN DOMESTIC MATTERS HAS BEEN DAMAGED. THE  
GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO HAVE MISREAD DRastically THE PUBLIC  
MOOD IN ATTEMPTING TO REMOVE COSTLY SUBSIDIES FROM BASIC  
CONSUMER ITEMS TOO QUICKLY AND WITHOUT CAREFUL PREPARATION.  
INCREASED TRANSFERS FROM SHOCKED DONOR NATIONS SUCH AS  
SAUDI ARABIA COULD PROVIDE A GREATER FINANCIAL CUSHION  
THAN EGYPT HAS KNOWN IN THE PAST, BUT THERE IS AS YET  
NO INDICATION OF SAUDI WILLINGNESS TO DO THIS. MOREOVER,  
BASIC REFORMS MUST STILL BE IMPLEMENTED IF WESTERN  
CAPITAL IS TO BE ATTRACTED TO LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT  
PROJECTS, AND THOSE REFORMS WILL BE NO LESS DESIRABLE  
FOR THE AVERAGE EGYPTIAN IN THE FUTURE THAN THEY WERE IN

JANUARY, ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT MAY BECOME MORE ADEPT IN TRYING TO IMPLEMENT THEM.

5. THE RIYADH SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN LATE OCTOBER PROVIDED THE SETTING FOR A RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA, FOLLOWING WHICH SADAT HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN EXPOUNDING THE ARAB CASE FOR THE SPEEDY RESUMPTION OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. ALTHOUGH SADAT HAS LED THE "PEACE OFFENSIVE" THUS FAR, HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CONDUCT UNILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS AS HE DID PRIOR TO THE SIGNING OF SINAI II. SADAT, IN EFFECT, HAS ENTERED INTO A PARTNERSHIP WITH SYRIA AND SAUDI ARABIA ON NEGOTIATING STRATEGY. WHILE HE MAY BE ABLE TO ARGUE WITHIN THAT PARTNERSHIP IN FAVOR OF ARAB POSITIONS WHICH MIGHT FACILITATE RAPID PROGRESS, HE WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE CONCRETE MOVES ONLY WITH THE CONCURRENCE OF THE OTHER TWO STATES.

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6. SYRIA. ASAD IS ENTERING HIS SEVENTH YEAR AS SYRIA'S LEADER, A LENGTHY TENURE FOR THAT COUNTRY. HIS INTERVENTION IN LEBANON, PARTICULARLY THE FIGHTING AGAINST PALESTINIAN FORCES, WAS UNPOPULAR AMONG MANY SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION, AND SEVERAL TRADITIONAL SYRIAN RIVALRIES HAVE SURFACED IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS. IN ADDITION, IRAQI AND PALESTINIAN OPPONENTS OF THE REGIME HAVE BECOME MORE ACTIVE. THERE HAVE BEEN INSTANCES OF FACTIONAL VIOLENCE, AND AN ATTEMPT WAS MADE ON THE LIFE OF FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM. ASAD HAS SHOWN HIMSELF TO BE AN ASTUTE POLITICIAN, AND HE SEEMS TO HAVE THE SECURITY SERVICES WELL IN HAND; NEVERTHELESS, HIS GRIP ON THE REINS OF POWER IS NOT AS SECURE AS IT WAS A YEAR AGO.

7. SINCE THE RIYADH CONFERENCE IN LATE OCTOBER, SYRIA HAS BEEN ABLE TO THINK BEYOND ITS LEBANON INVOLVEMENT AND CONSIDER ITS BROADER REGIONAL GOALS. AT THE SAME TIME, CONTINUED FIGHTING IN SOUTHERN LEBANON DEMONSTRATES THAT MANY DECISIONS REMAIN TO BE MADE AFFECTING THE DURABILITY OF AGREEMENTS MADE THUS FAR AND IMPACTING ON SYRIA'S POSTURE VIS-A-VIS ISRAEL. AS A RESULT OF RIYADH, NEVERTHELESS, ASAD HAS A FAIRLY FREE HAND IN LEBANON, RECEIVED IN RETURN FOR ALLOWING SADAT TO TAKE THE LEAD IN PROMOTING THE RESUMPTION OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

8. ASAD'S OWN CONTRIBUTION TO THE ARAB "PEACE OFFENSIVE" HAS BEEN TO MODIFY SOMEWHAT HIS PREVIOUS PUBLIC STAND ON PLO PARTICIPATION IN ANY NEW TALKS, HINTING THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE ARAB STATES TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT THE PLO. SUCH A POSTURE, HOWEVER, IS

PRIMARILY AN EFFORT TO FORCE A WEAKENED PLO TO MODERATE ITS OWN POSITIONS AND SHOULD NOT BE READ AS A LASTING SHIFT IN THE SUBSTANTIVE SYRIAN POSITION ON PALESTINIAN RIGHTS. ON THE CONTRARY, IN HIS EFFORT TO REGAIN HIS PREVIOUS STATURE AS CHAMPION OF THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE,

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ASAD WILL NOT MAKE CONCESSIONS ON SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES OF INTEREST TO PALESTINIANS WITHOUT BEING JOINED BY

BOTH EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA. ONCE NEGOTIATIONS ARE JOINED, ASAD'S DOMESTIC SITUATION WILL LEAD HIM TO INSIST ON TERRITORIAL GAINS THAT ARE MEANINGFUL IN MILITARY TERMS AND TO REJECT INSIGNIFICANT GAINS MERELY TO SHOW PROGRESS.

9. JORDAN. THE HASHEMITE REGIME REMAINS IN FIRM CONTROL, ALTHOUGH GROWING DISCONTENT AMONG THE LOWER RANKS OF THE MILITARY--FOCUSED ON LOW PAY BUT EXACERBATED BY GRIEVANCES AGAINST SOME SENIOR OFFICERS-- REMAINS A PROBLEM FOR THE REGIME. IN ADDITION, THE SUCCESSFUL PENETRATION OF THE INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL IN AMMAN BY A BAND OF IRAQI-SUPPORTED TERRORISTS RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT THE KING'S PERSONAL VULNERABILITY

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